

Reader

Social Studies

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Hello, Good-bye, and Other Customs



by Anthony James



Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Expository Nonfiction	• World Cultures • Customs • Communication	• Definitions • Graphic Aids	• Farewell Words • Homophones

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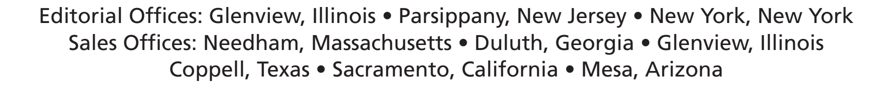


Hello, Good-bye, and Other Customs



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Customs

How do you greet people when you meet them? How do you wish them well, when they leave? Do you speak one way to someone your age, but another way to someone older?

It may surprise you, but people all over the world have different ways of doing these things. These different ways are called *customs.*

Sometimes we are not very aware of customs. We learn them just by living with our family. When we are little, we watch what others do, and we do the same things too.





But if we travel to other countries, we notice customs right away. We may notice that when people talk they are very polite and keep their eyes down. In some countries, people may stand closer to each other than some of us normally do.

Customs are just ways that people do things. Different customs are not correct or incorrect. They are just different. And some customs are very interesting! Read the following examples, and you will see.





Bowing in Japan

People in the United States have many ways of saying hello and good-bye. Adults may just say the words, or they may shake hands too. They may even say hello or good-bye as they hug and kiss.

In Japan, people say the Japanese words for hello and good-bye, but they also bow. Bowing properly is very important. People practice until they are capable of doing it just right.

Men and boys keep their hands at their sides and bow from the waist. Women and girls place their hands just touching in front.

In a proper bow, people have their backs straight and their heels together. They keep their eyes lowered. When people rise, they do it slowly. A bow lasts about three seconds.

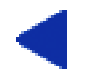
Sometimes one person rises from bowing before the other person does. This can make the person feel awkward. If this happens, the person who rose bows again. Often, people bow several times, especially when saying good-bye. The lower a person bows, the more respect or emotion they are showing.

Some bows are done while standing, and others while kneeling. People also bow to say "I'm sorry" and "thank you."

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bow: to lower one's head, or sometimes to lower the entire upper body from the waist

rise: come up





Here are some ways people say hello and good-bye in other countries.

France

In France, as in many countries in Europe, people sometimes kiss each other on both cheeks when saying hello and good-bye. The right cheek is kissed first, and then the left. Sometimes people do not actually kiss the cheeks. They just "kiss the air" as they press their cheeks together.

Extend Language **Farewell and Good-Bye**

People occasionally say *farewell* as another English word for *good-bye. Farewell* means "I wish you well." *Farewell* also is used as an adjective, *We went to his farewell dinner,* or as a noun, *We gave her a nice farewell. Good-bye* is a short form of a wish that originally was "God be with you."

Arab Countries

People in Arab countries shake hands when they say hello and good-bye. After a handshake, people sometimes place their right hands over their hearts to show that they are sincere.

When greeting close friends, Arab men use both hands to shake hands. Men shake hands only with men. It is not considered polite for men and women to shake hands.

India and Thailand

The traditional way of greeting people in India and Thailand also shows respect. People bring their hands together close to their chests as if they were praying and do a slight bow.

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sincere: honest, real









Respect for Older People

Respect for older people is very important in many countries. In the Philippines, young people have a special way of greeting older people. The young person takes the older person's right hand and brings his or her forehead down to touch the older person's hand.

Knowing About Customs

There is no book that can tell all there is to know about customs. People have customs for almost everything they do—dressing, eating, celebrating, and working. There are even customs for giving and receiving gifts.

But now you know a little about some customs in a few countries.

Can you think of some customs of the United States or other countries that you could share?

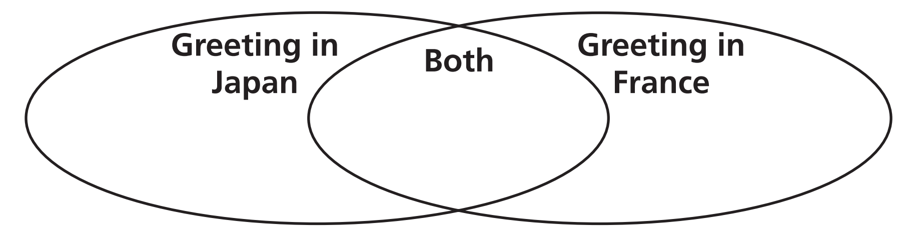


Talk About It

1. Why do you think greeting people is an important activity all over the world?
2. How do people treat older people in many countries?

Write About It

3. On a paper, make a Venn diagram to compare and contrast any two customs of greeting or farewell in this book or another custom that you know.



Extend Language

Homophones are words that sound alike. The verb *bow* (that rhymes with *now*) sounds just like the word *bough. Bough* means "a tree branch." *Bow* and *bough* are homophones. Find a word in this book that is a homophone of *waste.*

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